

It came as somewhat of a surprise that on the 30 April 2006 a *Spatalistis bifasciana* emerged, followed by two further examples, one on each of 1 and 2 May. Examination of the leaves found a pupa extruded from a cocoon within a tightly bound Sweet Chestnut leaf fragment. Reference to Emmet (1988. *A field guide to the smaller British Lepidoptera*. British Entomological and Natural History Society, London) gives the berries of Buckthorn *Rhamnus*, Alder Buckthorn *Frangula* or Dogwood *Swida* (= *Cornus*) as foodplants, Razowski (2001. *Die Tortriciden Mitteleuropas*. F. Slamka, Bratislava) adding Bilberry *Vaccinium myrtillus*, Bog Bilberry *V. uliginosum*, Privet *Ligustrum vulgare* and Cornelian-cherry *Cornus mas*.

It may be pertinent to add here that whilst undertaking a study of the moth fauna of various age classes of Sweet Chestnut coppice in Rewell Wood, West Sussex, in 2003, 21 *S. bifasciana* were recorded on 25 June 2003, with a maximum of nine in one MV trap (Clarke, 2004. *The Waved Carpet moth Hydrelia sylvata* ([Denis & Schiffmüller], 1775) coppice woodland survey 2003. Butterfly Conservation, Wareham). This trap was placed in the oldest coppice block sampled (c. 20 years of age) and, perhaps, would be expected to be in an area with the greatest concentration of dead leaves hanging from trees.

In answer to the question posed in the title, it would seem that this is an unlikely yes! This species is not listed in Parsons & Greatorex-Davies (2006. The value of Sweet Chestnut *Castanea sativa* as a foodplant for Lepidoptera. *Entomologist's Record & Journal of Variation*, **118**: 1-11) and would appear to be yet another Nationally Scarce species (currently graded Notable) associated with this undervalued tree.— MARK PARSONS, Butterfly Conservation, Manor Yard, East Lulworth, Wareham, Dorset BH20 5QP.

### **Unusual flight time of the Sword-grass *Xylena exoleta* (L.) (Lep.: Noctuidae) in Perthshire**

During the period of 27-31 December 2005, the Rothamsted Insect Survey light trap at Kinnaird (trap number 576, O. S. grid reference NO 241291) caught a single specimen of *Xylena exoleta*. This univoltine species generally flies during September and October (the last record from this trap was 27 September 2002) before hibernating through the winter and taking to the wing again in March and May. It is therefore very unusual, especially in the more northerly reaches of its distribution, to find a specimen flying in late December.

The Sword-grass has declined greatly in recent years and its range has contracted so that its strongholds are now in northern England and Wales, and throughout Scotland. Occasional records in the south of the country are probably immigrants. My thanks to Trefor Woodford for his continued hard work in running the trap so efficiently.— PHILIP J. L. GOULD, Co-ordinator of the Rothamsted Insect Survey Light-trap Network, Plant & Invertebrate Ecology Division, Rothamsted Research, Harpenden, Hertfordshire AL5 2JQ (E-mail: phil.gould@bbsrc.ac.uk).